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ABSTRACT

The Education Commission of the States appointed a task force composed of members of Congress, state legislatures, state boards of education, chief state school officers, business, industry and other pertinent service agencies to recommend to the Federal, state and local governments methods whereby interstate and interagency cooperation can provide educational and other services to migrant workers and their families. The task force developed two broad categories of recommendations. The first category consisted of task force position statements that address goals for migrant education, limitations or guidelines in pursuit of cooperation, task force strategy, and the need for more public information concerning migrant students and families. In the second category, critical areas of change needed at the Federal, state and local levels were addressed. Within this category were such recommendations as assigning coordination responsibility, administrative procedures, interstate planning, and Federal and state program regulations. Suggestions for future project and task force action were included. Among the recommendations were: more emphasis be placed on the economic benefits migrants bring to local communities and school districts; after consultation with the states, separate regulations specifically for migrant students be developed by USOE; funding on a regional, multistate or migrant stream administration basis for planning and implementation strategy be developed by USOE. (NQ)

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Interstate Migrant Education Task Force

First Interim Report: Preliminary Findings and Recommendations

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Interstate Migrant Education Task Force

First Interim Report: Preliminary Findings and Recommendations

Education Commission of the States
Denver, Colorado
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Report No. 111

June 1977

Additional copies of this report may be obtained from the Interstate Migrant Education Project, Education Commission of the States, Suite 300, 1860 Lincoln Street, Denver, Colorado 80295, (303) 861-4917.

PREFACE

This First Interim Report was initially written for use by the member states funding this project. As migrant issues were further explored and discussed, and given the nature of the constituency to be served, it seemed imperative to share the recommendations of the Education Commission of the States Interstate Migrant Education Task Force with all states, entities and individuals that want to address the issues identified and utilize the recommendations toward resolution of those issues.

This is not a step-by-step "how to" brochure, because the autonomous nature of individual state and local legislation, administrative policies and procedures prevents the kind of straightforward, prescriptive approach that can be applied to singular, isolated issues. The intra/interstate nature of migrant issues preempts any singular approach. Alternative or modified approaches need to be applied to bring about changes that will facilitate common solutions for the various states in applying a comprehensive approach to the delivery of education and support services to migrants.

The activity which is the subject of this report was supported in whole or in part by the U.S. Office of Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare. However, the opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Office of Education and no official endorsement by the U.S. Office of Education should be inferred.

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FOREWORD

My interest in migrant education stems back to the time when, as a young man, I was a migrant worker in Arizona, Idaho, Montana and Oregon. As an educator, judge and public official, I have seen the problems of migrants in education, law, employment, health and other areas.

The Interstate Migrant Education Task Force offers us an opportunity to address the most pressing problems migrants have – the education, health and general welfare of their children. Education is one way for people to increase their opportunities to achieve the American dream. What follows is the product of our meetings and much thought on the part of one of the best groups of people I have ever worked with. Our task force has a commitment to positive and productive change in the education system that will increase the education opportunities for the children of migrant workers.

These recommendations are not the last word on probable solutions to very difficult problems, but are a first step in a long journey that we hope will improve the chances of migrant children to enjoy health and happiness.

Raul H. Castro
Governor of Arizona and Chairman, Interstate Migrant Education Task Force

OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The Interstate Migrant Education Project is a cooperative effort between the Education Commission of the States (ECS) and the states of Arizona, California, Michigan, New York, Texas and Washington. Arkansas and Florida joined the project during its second year in January 1977. One of the primary aims of the project is to develop methods whereby interstate and interagency cooperation can provide education and other services to migrant workers and their families. To achieve the goal of interstate and interagency cooperation, ECS appointed a task force chaired by the Honorable Raul H. Castro, Governor of Arizona, and composed of members of Congress, state legislatures, state boards of education, chief state school officers, business, industry and other pertinent service agencies, to develop sound and feasible recommendations for the federal, state and local levels of government.

The Interstate Migrant Education Task Force has determined the critical issue to be the improvement of the education system, as well as social and health services, to meet the unique needs of children of migrant workers and their families. Improvements in education must be made for children whose lives are characterized by poor general health, lower than average scholastic achievement, low family income and much mobility.

The improvements regarded as necessary by the task force fall within the following three general categories:

- Improved cooperation among state education agencies (SEAs) in the administration, planning, implementation, staffing, monitoring and evaluation of Title I (migrant program) of the federal Elementary/Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

- Improved cooperation among federal, state and local agencies that serve migrant families and children.

- Improved cooperation between the SEA and local school districts in the enrollment of migrant students in terms of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Title I migrant education programs.

Pending completion of one or more of our recommendations, the task force has been using the U.S. Office of Education (USOE) definition of migrant, which is: "Those persons who have moved from one school district to another in the same state or to one in another state for the purpose of finding temporary or seasonal employment in one or more agricultural activities. . . . Agricultural activity means any activity related to crop production, including, but not limited to, soil preparation and storage, curing, canning and freezing of cultivated crops. . . ." (USOE Title I, Migrant Branch Proposed Rules, July 1975.) The definition was amended in 1974 to include children of migrant fishermen as well.

I. Recommendations to the U.S. Office of Education (Migrant Education) and Other Federal Agencies Involved in Migrant Programs

A. Formulation of specific interrelated regulations for migrant programs and services.

B. Standardization of the definition of migrant workers and eligibility by the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare (DHEW) in conjunction with the Department of Labor, the Public Health Service and the Office of Child Development (Headstart and Indian/Migrant Division), Department of Social Welfare Medical Services, through Title XIX of the Social Security Act, EPSDT.

C. Assure that migrant education funds are focused on the concerns and specific needs identified by the agencies.

D. Assure equal access to services on an interstate basis for all federally supported programs; i.e., education, social services, Title XIX and Title XX of the Social Security Act, labor, etc.

II. Recommendations to the States

A. Assignment to a person or group the responsibility for making needed improvements in education and other public and private services for the benefit of migrant workers and their families. This group is to have access and impact into all agencies serving migrant workers and their families. Better coordination processes established in order that exchange of

concepts in education and related services coincide across state lines.

B. Development of administrative procedures that accommodate interstate cooperation, i.e., personnel exchange visits, participation with state liaison and multistate coordinated projects.

C. Establishment of a system for conducting interstate planning, i.e., SEA allocation of funds to effect a mechanism for improved interstate planning.

III. Recommendations for Federal-State-Local Relationships

A. The U.S. Office of Education should mandate interstate planning and cooperation.

B. Requirement by interstate cooperatives or other administrative structures using federal funds to develop federal-state-local operating procedures for cooperation.

C. Standardize, by using comparable operating criteria, state and local needs assessment and evaluation between states.

Task Force Recommendations

Two broad categories of recommendations were developed. The first section consists of task force position statements that address goals for migrant education, limitations or guidelines in pursuit of cooperation, task force strategy and the need for more public information concerning migrant students and families.

Section two of the report highlights critical areas of change needed at the federal, state and local levels. Within this second category are such recommendations as assigning coordination responsibility, administrative procedures, interstate planning, and federal and state program regulations. Also included are suggestions for project and task force action to be implemented during the future months. These are reflected in project objectives and tasks for 1977.

Additional recommendations that relate to children of migrant workers and their families will be presented in subsequent task force publications.

Section I
TASK FORCE POSITION STATEMENTS

I. Goals for the Education of Migrant Students

The following statements represent the position of the ECS Interstate Migrant Education Task Force. The statements reflect the basic assumptions made by the task force and provide a framework for understanding subsequent recommendations.

It is recognized that:

A. The education goals and expectations established for migrant students must be the same as those for all students in preschool through postsecondary programs.

B. Program goals should be student oriented, rather than program oriented, so as to insure that programs serve students individually, instead of institutions.

C. Opportunities must be developed for states to cooperatively provide services and to meet their legal and moral obligations to migrant students and their families in order to implement the education goals on an interstate basis.

D. In order to implement these objectives successfully (on an interstate basis), some administrative, as well as student-oriented, goals are needed.

E. Migrant programs must address the unique education and related needs of migrant students, particularly the expansion of existing programs for limited or non-English-speaking migrant students as a means of equalizing education opportunities.

II. Traditional and Legal Constraints Affecting Education and Other Comprehensive Services for Migrant Families

The diversity of responsibility for education and other traditional migrant services on federal, state and local levels is reflected in numerous laws, regulations and customs, many of which were enacted before the education of migrant students

became a recognized equal education opportunity need. The Interstate Migrant Education Task Force recognizes that:

A. Constitutional limits and national traditions regarding state and local prerogatives exist that restrict the nature of possible change in education and other migrant services.

B. Federal or state efforts must not usurp the constitutional prerogatives of respective levels of government.

C. The lack of national, state and local policies (statutes, regulations and administrative guidelines) concerning interstate, interagency and intrastate cooperation is a major barrier to interstate cooperation.

D. There are limitations on state and local expenditures. State and local funds are often earmarked for certain services or age groups.

E. Compulsory attendance laws varying from state to state are a potential barrier to providing continuity in the education of migrants.

F. The administrative procedures of state government agencies are sometimes barriers to interstate cooperation.

G. Local schools, as well as states, are reluctant to make comparisons of pupil performance.

III. Implementation: Position Statements on a Task Force Strategy to Create Better Education Opportunities and Other Comprehensive Services for Migrant Families

It is recognized that:

A. One of the primary aims of the task force is to establish an interstate and interagency system of cooperation that will maximize the quality of education and other services for migrant families and emphasize each state's responsibilities in these areas.

B. The goals of interstate and interagency cooperation may best be achieved by utilizing third-party intermediary, regional approaches, and multistate and migrant stream structures.

C. The Education Commission of the States, or a similar third party, must be involved in efforts to achieve interstate cooperation and provide opportunities for activities currently not possible under federal grant guidelines or restricted by the amount of monies provided to the states for administration of migrant education programs.

D. States must recognize, accept and implement interstate cooperation.

E. Business, industry and labor must be an integral part of a national effort to provide career education, vocational training and job opportunities for migrant families.

IV. Implementation: Position Statements on the Need for Public Information and Public Relations Efforts on Behalf of Migrant Families

It is recommended that:

A. The task force initiate better and more intense communication at federal, state and local levels in order to make the public aware of the attributes of the migrant workers and their families.

B. More emphasis should be placed on the economic benefits the migrant workers bring to local communities and school districts.

Section II
FEDERAL-STATE-LOCAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The system of providing services to migrants has at least five basic elements: administration, planning, staffing, program services, and monitoring and evaluation. The issues surrounding these five elements are addressed in the following recommendations:

I. Federal (USOE Title I, Migrant Branch) Recommendations

Regulations governing program administration and financing.
The Title I migrant programs have never established regulations specifically for migrant students. Rather, the guidelines for regular Title I programs serve "educationally disadvantaged children" who are not migrant agricultural workers or fishermen. Considering the current regulations and the need for new regulations, the task force recommends that, after consultation with the states:

A. Separate regulations specifically for migrant students be developed by USOE.

B. Proposed and subsequent regulations for migrant education be periodically reviewed, refined and updated.

C. Section 116d.39, paragraph a, of the Proposed Rules (1975) for State Education Agencies Programs for Migratory Children, which encourages program and state coordination, be carried out more diligently and enforced by USOE.

II. Federal Recommendation

Definition of migrants.
A continuing problem is the lack of a common definition of migrant workers and their children by all agencies serving migrants. Coordination and clarification of definitions would enhance cooperation among agencies for an effective human services delivery system with education as the central focus.

It is recommended that the Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare convene an interagency committee comprised of representatives of all federal

agencies and those sections of DHEW that serve migrants in order to standardize the definition and the program eligibility of the migrant workers and their families.

III. Federal Recommendation

Planning funds.
Currently, all funds go directly to state education agencies from USOE for direct services.

The task force recommends that funding on a regional, multistate or migrant stream administration basis for planning and implementation strategy be developed by USOE.

IV. Federal Recommendations

Coordinating activities.
It is recommended that the U.S. Office of Education encourage and facilitate the following:

A. Migrant programs must look at other sources of support, including financial, training and technical assistance, and personnel support.

B. USOE should explore, develop and promote procedures for interstate reciprocity for any person needing licensing or certification in their profession that is part of comprehensive services for the migrant workers and their families.

V. State Recommendations

Assigning responsibility for coordinating migrant services.
The issue addressed in this subsection speaks to the need for assigning responsibility to a person, agency or group to insure that efforts on behalf of migrants are not omitted, fragmented, overlapped or duplicated.

It is recommended that:

A. The responsibility for migrant education, including interstate and interagency planning, be placed with the chief state school officer.

B. A state task force be formed to facilitate interagency cooperation. The model should be under the direc-

tion of the governor, with a planning group representing business, industry, labor and education, the departments of education, social services, health, agriculture, the state pediatric association, the division of human resources and other agencies that provide services to migrant families.

C. A joint legislative committee be formed to establish legislative policy across agency lines and to develop legislation necessary for the improvement of migrant services in coordination and cooperation with other categorical programs.

VI. State Recommendations

Intrastate planning.
Another issue in all state matters concerning education is the tradition of local autonomy. This tradition makes a statewide plan difficult to establish.

It is recommended that:

A. The state board of education and chief state school officer require the use of state migrant planning processes that involve local governing boards, district personnel, parents and community representatives.

B. Primary care practitioners and other human service providers must be involved in the planning processes.

VII. Federal-State Recommendations

Achieving cooperation at the program level
A problem that schools have in serving migrant families is the discontinuity between programs in terms of education content and focus.

It is recommended that:

A. Technical assistance centers be established by states, on a regional, multistate or migrant stream administrative basis, to provide technical assistance to each state.

B. Sharing in the areas of curriculum, planning, training of teachers and other staff, and the use of materials be developed between states serving the same or

similar types of students; i.e., state agency establishment of common areas in curriculum content across state lines to collaborate with local education agencies for the maximum instruction benefits provided for migrant students.

C. Institutions of higher education, including community college, state university and state college systems, be encouraged to promote, develop and enhance the recruitment, entrance and retention of migrant students.

D. Existing interstate organizations for accreditation and cooperation, such as the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education, be contacted to discuss what role they might play in coordinating programs between states.

VIII. Federal-State Recommendations

Needs assessment and evaluation of student success and achievement.

To date there is no agreement on the definition of migrant student needs and their order of priority. There is no method of determining the common needs of migrant students within states, between states or on a national basis.

It is recommended that:

A. An education needs assessment may best be done in the migrant's home state. The sending state should decide what needs are to be met. The receiving state should follow their recommendations to the maximum extent possible.

B. Common needs assessment procedures be explored for migrant students. The methods of collecting and utilizing information must be similar for all states.

C. Long-range socioeconomic and other demographic data on populations for program purposes be shared.

D. Attention be given to the development and better utilization of staff training programs to insure that migrant students have teachers who are well-qualified and effective. Intergovernmental interstate personnel exchanges must be explored to insure the availability

of staff necessary to meet the needs of migrant students.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER TASK FORCE ACTIVITIES

We must ask ourselves, "What are the implications of effecting such change, and how can we begin to implement some of these recommendations?" The degree to which we are successful in doing so will help us answer the following long-term questions:

- What are the most effective means of providing services to migrant students and their families?
- Where should the responsibility for services lie?
- What incentives are needed to insure that services meet the needs of migrant students and their families?
- What legislation is needed at the federal, state and local levels to insure that services are provided?

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Education Commission of the States

The Education Commission of the States is a nonprofit organization formed by interstate compact in 1966. Forty-six states, American Samoa, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands are now members. Its goal is to further a working relationship among governors, state legislators and educators for the improvement of education. This report is an outcome of one of many commission undertakings at all levels of education. The commission offices are located at Suite 300, 1860 Lincoln Street, Denver, Colorado 80295.

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